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Farmers' Strikes

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U. S. Department of Agriculture

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3 FARMERS' HOLIDAY MOVEMENT,

Selected References*

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Babcock, J. O. The farm revolt in Iowa. Social Forces 12(3):369-373.
Mar. 1934.

"Presented before the rural sociology section of the American Sociological Society, Chicago, June 29, 1933."

Considers the issues, enemies, techniques, changed attitudes of deference toward education and extension service, and press reactions of the farm revolt in Iowa which has been growing since the post-war deflation. The article is concluded with a number of questions which suggest possible problems for study.

Bliven, Bruce. The Corn Belt cracks down the Blue Eagle in the Middle West. New Republic 77(990):36-38. Nov. 22, 1933.

The grievances of the farmer are briefly stated - "farm prices went away up in July but didn't stay there; ... and the administration at Washington has been slow in putting its promises of improvement into execution. He feels that the A.A.A.... has lagged behind the N.R.A.... Despite all the federal and state legislation, farmers are still being evicted from their homes. Mortgages are still being foreclosed." This is held as being the background of the farmers' strike. The Governors' conference is considered.

Bliven, Bruce. Milo Reno and his farmers - The strike in the Corn Belt - and after. New Repub. 77(991):63-65. Nov. 29, 1933.

The replies of farmers (worked out in percentages) to certain questions are given. They include the following: whether they approved of the farm strike; whether they liked the corn-and-hog reduction program; about proposals for lending money to the farmer on unsold corn by the government; and whether they approved in general, of President Roosevelt and what he is trying to do.

Brunner, E. de S., and Kolb, J. H. Rural social trends. 386pp. New York and London, McGraw-Hill book company, inc. 1933.

P. 302 of chapter XII, 1930 and after, is on the farmers' holiday movement. The following is taken from that page:

"Despite all these difficulties, aggravated in some sections by the great drought of 1930, the people carried on and indeed in many places contrasted their situation favorably with that of the

*Supplementary to a mimeographed list dated August 15, 1933, entitled Farmers' Strikes and Riots in the United States, 1932-1933.

city. There were few reports of local disturbances or of attempts at demonstrations until the late summer of 1932. At that time the 'farmers' thirty-day holiday' began in Iowa in an attempt to secure higher prices for their products. As this is written, reports of the organization of similar efforts come from three or four other midwestern states. What makes this phenomenon significant is that the farmers in one of the most fertile states in the Union, farmers who are operators and capitalists and who have a long record of conservatism in state and national policies, should be goaded by the situation, by the fear of losing their lands, into adopting the measures of the industrial laborer when on strike. They have attempted to enforce their 'holiday' by picketing and by stopping shipments of food to the urban market. They have resisted efforts to make them disperse.

"This is a new thing in the United States, betokening a significant change in the psychology of at least some farmers. It not only dramatizes the agricultural difficulties of the time, but it marks a distinct departure from the type of movement among rural people that has characterized other periods of severe economic stress on the farm.

"The 1870's saw the rise of the Granger movement... But the 1930's have as yet seen no green uprising save the 'farmers' holiday' in Iowa and some other middle western states. The field-workers of this study again and again met deep discouragement and dissatisfaction but found no allegiance to a leader, a slogan or an ism. Rather there was bewilderment and pessimism, a sense that the problems involved were so intricate, so varied, so interrelated, with world conditions that the way lay perhaps not by progressing farther along a well-known road but by constructing a new highway, a task not for a popular hero but for the scientists and the engineers."

Farm strike fades out as Wisconsin withdraws. Northwestern Miller 176(6): 467. Nov. 22, 1933.

"The midwestern farm strike died down this week after two Wisconsin farm organizations which had supplied the major support of the movement withdrew and declared the strike at an end in that state."

Farm strike gains breadth in midwest. Journal of Commerce [N. Y.] 158(12, 248): 3. Oct. 24, 1933.

Railroad workers pledge co-operation - Governors plan conference.

"Disappointment was expressed in some farm areas over President Roosevelt's speech on Sunday night, which made no mention of cost guarantees, although it promised higher prices. The strike is to continue regardless of the speech, it was indicated."

Farm strike is ordered to go into effect today. Journal of Commerce [N. Y.] 158(12,246): p.1, col. 2. Oct. 21, 1933.

"St. Paul, Oct. 20. - A nation-wide farm strike, to become effective to-morrow at noon, was called here today by the National Farmers Holiday Association. In issuing the strike proclamation, after a secret conference here, the association assailed the national Administration and set forth its grievances."

Farm strike meets with only partial success - little strike activity in 19 of 21 states where demonstrations were planned - produce continues to move to markets - railroad labor executive promises "sympathetic co-operation." Commercial & Financial Chronicle 137:3046-3047. Oct. 28, 1933.

Farm strike move revived. Oregon Farmer 56(24):441. Nov. 5, 1933.

Contains the "ultimatum" laid down to the nation by the National Farm Holiday Association, when, "late in October" they issued a national farm strike call.

Farm strike truce melts picket lines. Phila. Record, Nov. 19, 1933, p.5 (F)

"Madison, Wis., Nov. 18. - A truce to take effect immediately in the farm strike in Wisconsin was voted today by directors of the Wisconsin Farm Holiday Association and the Wisconsin Milk Pool.

"The truce will suspend picket activities in Wisconsin."

Farmers strike. Modern Miller 60(42):13. Oct. 21, 1933.

Editorial. "Farmers of six states on Oct. 19 called a 'Farm Strike,' to become effective at noon, Saturday, Oct. 21. A proclamation was issued which laid down an ultimatum to the Nation."

The "ultimatum" is quoted, Governor Bryan of Nebraska is also briefly quoted. Both the wheat embargo in Nebraska and the farm strike "show a period of stress and uncertainty."

Farmers to cease Iowa picketing. - Vote to support sheriff and keep roads open - Strike continues. Journal of Commerce [N. Y.] 158(12,262): 3. Nov. 10, 1933.

Special item to the Journal of Commerce.

Hard, William. Reno and revolt in Iowa. Today 1(3):1-2, 20-22. Nov. 11, 1933.

Gives the philosophy of Milo Reno, which is that the farmer shall get his cost for what he is able to sell. The ineffectiveness of the farm revolt is pointed out, also what farmers say about the farmers' strike. What the farmers think about the N.R.A., inflation, and the corn-hog plan is also told.

Hicks, Clifton. Upheaval in the Corn Belt. Harpers Mag. 169(1013): 621-632. Oct. 1934.

A political analysis of the Corn Belt and of the different organizations which the farmers of that region have for self-expression on economic affairs and agricultural problems - the Farmers Union, the Farm Holiday Association, the United Farmers League, and the Farm Bureau.

The writer thinks that a farm revolt this winter or next spring is very probable, that the third-party movement is growing, and that there is definite trend toward sectionalism.

Iowa farmers lose some enthusiasm for farm strike on prospect of crop loans from Government - Sentiment still favors "Holiday" in Wisconsin - Governor of North Dakota partially lifts wheat embargo to permit durum shipments. Commercial and Financial Chronicle 137(3569): 3602. Nov. 18, 1933.

Reno, Milo. What is the farm holiday movement? Today 1(7):8, 23. Dec. 9, 1933.

In this article Mr. Reno defends the farmers' holiday movement which he says Mr. Hard inaccurately portrayed in the November 11, 1933, issue of Today.

Signs forecast weakening of farm strike - Picketing abandoned at Sioux City, after disorders which included burning of railway bridge and shooting at freight train-Head of Farm Federation opposes strike - Aide to Secretary Wallace says farm income will be 20 per cent above year ago - Secretary predicts recovery program will aid farmer soon - Drop in live stock receipts - Milo Reno says Holiday is not waning. Commercial and Financial Chronicle 137(3568):3437, 3438. Nov. 11, 1933.

The striking farmers' case. New Repub. 76(987):322-323. Nov. 1, 1933.

This is an editorial presenting the reasons for the farmers' discontent. The writer does not think the strike can improve the farmers' situation and believes that the principal remedies urged by the farm-strike leaders would be ineffective. The activities of the government in his behalf are commended as far as they go, but the administration should go farther, especially in increasing the purchasing power of city consumers, in relieving the overburden of mortgage debt, in the public works program, etc.

Taylor, C. C. Notes on some theoretical aspects of the effect of direct action farmers' movements on farmers' organizations. Social Forces 12(3):386-387. Mar. 1934.

"These notes ... have been greatly condensed from the original longer discussion as presented before the Rural Sociology Section of the American Sociological Society, Summer Conference, Chicago, June 29, 1933..." -The Editors.

In conclusion the author writes: "Summing up, it might be said, therefore, that any adequate understanding of direct action farmers' movements demands a study of attitudes on the one hand and of situations on the other. To these must be added the study of borrowed patterns and the study of direct action leaders. Techniques for many of these have already been developed. What, therefore, is needed is to combine all these techniques into a composite study of specific farmer direct actions. There have been few, if any opportunities equal to the present for such a study."

Tetreau, E. D. How to study the sociology of direct action farmers' movements. Social Forces 12(3):374-379. Mar. 1934.

"This paper ... has been condensed from the original longer discussion as presented before the rural sociology section of the American Sociological Society, Chicago, June 29, 1933. Consequently, much of the interesting illustrative material has necessarily been omitted." -The Editors.

"The general objectives of a sociological study of direct action farmers' movements are identical with those of all scientific inquiry and the increase of predictability concerning the phenomena. By preliminary survey and by intensive study of direct action farmers' movements three things ought to be accomplished. First, we need a study of the factors and conditions out of which these movements spring; second, we need to know how they arise, develop, and decline; and third, we need dependable estimates of their effects upon other farmers' organizations and upon the whole course of rural social organization. The first two of these points are covered in this paper, while Professor Wakeley has included the third in his discussion in this number of Social Forces, pp.380-385."

Threatened mid-west farm strike averted when "Holiday Association" finds present inopportune time. Commercial and Financial Chronicle 139 (3613):1812. Sept. 22, 1934.

Wakeley, R. E. How to study the effects of direct action movements on farm organizations. Social Forces 12(3):380-385. Mar. 1934.

"This paper...has been greatly condensed from the original longer discussion as presented before the rural sociology section of the American Sociological Society, Chicago, June 29, 1933. Consequently, much of the interesting illustrative material and details of methodology and procedure have necessarily been omitted." -The Editors.

The term "direct action" as used in this paper means actual or threatened violence to person or property. The article is in four parts: historical aspects of the problem; the study of a typical situation - Iowa; information needed in studying the effects of direct action movements on farm organizations; method and procedure for studying the effects of direct action movements on organizations.

Wide support asked by farm strikers. - Farmers vote to carry on no-buy, no-sell drive to a finish. Journal of Commerce [N. Y.] 158(12,247): 1, 3. Oct. 23, 1933.

"Avoca, Iowa, Oct. 22. - With the nationwide farmers' strike declared in force yesterday, leaders of the movement were today unable to ascertain just how effective the farm holiday had been at the start...

"Members and non-members of the holiday association were urged to support the movement to refrain from both buying and selling until cost of production is achieved for farm products.

"The strike was termed a struggle by Mr. Reno to determine 'whether the farmer shall become a peasant, the menial slave of the users and the industrials, or retain the independence inherited from his fathers.'"

Wisconsin farmers may continue strike. Journal of Commerce [N. Y.] 158 (12,258): 5. Nov. 4, 1933.

"Madison, Wis., No. v.3. Continuation of the Wisconsin farm strike by the milk pool and re-entry of the Wisconsin Holiday Association in the strike tonight were indicated strongly following a test vote taken at a meeting of farmers' representatives here today. For the third successive day various farm groups gathered here to discuss marketing problems and strike matters."

Wisconsin milk pool to join farm strike. Journal of Commerce [N. Y.] 158(12,251):9. Oct. 27, 1933.

"Madison, Wis., Oct. 26. - The Wisconsin farm strike today began to turn serious attention to the closing off of milk used in the manufacture of ice cream, butter, cheese and milk products rather than preventing the distribution of fluid milk for home consumption. One of the most important developments was the decision of the Wisconsin Co-operative Milk Pool,... to join the Farmers' Holiday Association farm commodity strike next Tuesday, although the pool will give immediate co-operation in some localities."

